



Information for Health Care Professionals

Why should I be aware of NYC FITNESSGRAM?

In June 2009, more than 1.2 million NYC public school parents and students in grades K–12 received an NYC FITNESSGRAM report available in one of nine languages. Colorful graphs and easy-to-understand language tell students and parents if the child is in a “Healthy Fitness Zone” based on gender and age. NYC FITNESSGRAM can play a key role in discussions about childhood obesity.

What is NYC FITNESSGRAM?

NYC FITNESSGRAM provides measures of a child’s fitness, including body mass index (BMI), muscular strength and endurance, flexibility and aerobic capacity. Public school physical education teachers are taught how to collect this information. Annual NYC FITNESSGRAM reports help students, parents, and teachers set personal goals for students to improve their health-related fitness.

What information is on the report?

For children in grades K–3, the parent report shows whether the child’s BMI is healthy based on age and gender. Students in grades 4–12 receive two reports: one for themselves, and a different one for their parents. Both explain whether the child is in the Healthy Fitness Zone on ALL the measures of health-related fitness including BMI, aerobic fitness, muscular strength and endurance, and flexibility.

What standards are used to calculate BMI percentile and the “Healthy Fitness Zone”?

The BMI percentile is calculated using the 2000 CDC BMI-for-age growth charts (www.cdc.gov/bmi). The fitness assessment standards were developed by The Cooper Institute of Aerobic Research (<http://www.cooperinst.org/products/grams/index.cfm>). These Healthy Fitness Zone standards represent a level of fitness that offers some degree of protection against health problems associated with physical inactivity. Students are not compared to each other or to a fixed norm.

How can I use NYC FITNESSGRAM to jumpstart conversations with parents?

Ask parents of school-age children if they received a report for their child. NYC FITNESSGRAM reports include recommendations that help students improve their health-related fitness. Encourage parents and children to use the information included in the NYC FITNESSGRAM, along with your physical examination, and BMI for age classification to establish specific and realistic goals for improving diet and exercise habits. Motivating families to change behavior may seem difficult, but increasing physical activity is one of the most important things we can do to improve the health of children. Better fitness levels appear to be clearly associated with improved academic performance in New York City school children (Vital Signs, 2009).

How can I get more information about NYC FITNESSGRAM?

Full details, sample reports, and a demonstration video are at <http://schools.nyc.gov/fitness>. For more information, you can also contact NYCFITNESSGRAM@schools.nyc.gov.